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ABSTRACT

The Syracuse City School District alternative high school program outline offers an individualized program of instruction that is occupationally rather than academically oriented. The curriculum is divided into three phases. The first phase covers an intensive development of basic skills. General reading skills, vocabulary, English grammar, and arithmetic are developed until a student reaches an eighth grade proficiency in these areas. In phase 2, the student continues basic skill development and completes curriculum requirements in social studies, English, health, and science. The third phase includes an indepth study of the world of work in both practical and theoretical terms. The student will be exposed to the underlying principle of work, labor unions, government, economics, consumer education, and cultural institutions. It may also include vocational-technical training, on-the-job training, and/or intensive work experience in a specialized skill area. The end goal is successful employability and/or the ability to further the student's training or education. (MW)

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CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Syracuse, New York

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SECONDARY BULLETIN NO. 100
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COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR THE OCCUPATIONAL LEARNING CENTERS

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CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Syracuse, New York

I. BASIC INFORMATION

Title - Occupational Learning Center

Length of Program - Individualized

Grade Level - 9 - 12

Class Size - Individualized Study

Status of Course - Alternative High School Program

Credit - High School Diploma

Prerequisites - Students who do not elect the regular diploma program

Evaluation - Performance proficiency as measured by a variety of tools (see program description)

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This alternative high school program is a new concept which represents another program for secondary youth for the world of work. Students receive an individualized program of instruction that is occupationally oriented rather than academic. This inter-disciplinary instruction is combined with actual work experience and/or vocational training. Emphasis is concentrated on the basic skills of communication, computation, citizenship, scientific awareness, occupational orientation and career preparation. Every effort is made to assess the students' needs and provide encouragement and assistance sufficient to insure success in continuing a career oriented educational program. Progress is continuous so that each student can proceed as slow as he needs or as fast as he wishes.

Upon entry each student is provided with a prescribed curriculum that he must master before receiving his high school diploma from the parent school.

The curriculum of each Center is occupationally oriented rather than academically oriented. Much of the curriculum uses an interdisciplinary approach in covering the basic areas of reading, English grammar, math,and social studies. The curriculum is designed for the individualized study and continuous progress of each student.

The curriculum is divided into three phases. The first phase covers an intensive development of the basic skills. General reading skills, vocabulary, English grammar and arithmetic are developed until a student reaches an 8th grade proficiency in these areas. The curriculum is designed to ensure mastery of each grade level before proceeding to the next level. The student only studies in the areas in which he lacks proficiency.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (continued)

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In phase 2 a student continues to develop his reading, communication and computation skills while covering the requirements in social studies, English, health and science.

During this phase the staff devotes a great deal of time developing each student's particular needs and interests as set by his work experiences and own personal goals. A variety of structured and non-structured resources are used. This phase is designed to develop the requirements to progress to the third phase.

In the third phase of the curriculum, the student pursues an in-depth study of the world of work in both practical and theoretical terms. While perfecting reading, thinking and communication skills each student studies the practical problems he will face as a working adult. He is also exposed to the underlying principle of work, labor unions, government, economics, consumer education, cultural institutions both in this country and throughout the world. Various approaches will be used ranging from independent study to small group sessions.

Each exercise a student covers will be done to a certain proficiency level (90% or higher) before he goes on to the next in any particular series. This ensures that the student will not make false progress in any area.

The occupational sequence of the program guides each student through the necessary career stages. The primary goal is successful career planning by the time a student graduates.

Each student has specific needs that must be met if he is to succeed in the world of work. Only through their experiences with meaningful training and work situations can students be adequately prepared to succeed in the adult world of work. A student will participate in one or more of the following areas:

Vocational-technical training

On-the-job training

Intensive work experience in specialized skill area

The end goal of this phase of the program is successful employability and/or the ability to further the student's training or education.

This alternative program has a three phase evaluation procedure. The first step is the initial student evaluation. This is undertaken during the student's orientation to the Occupational Learning Center Program. At this stage the student is evaluated on the basis of his past records, our own achievement testing,and staff interviews to determine if the Occupational Learning Center program fits the specific needs of the student in question. The Center keeps a complete record of the initial evaluation

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (continued)

Secondly, evaluation is continuous throughout the year. This evaluation is based on the student's attendance, behavior, attitude, progress in school and in occupational readiness. Although this is a daily process in the Occupational Learning Center program, it is formalized quarterly for report to the student and the student's parents. It is placed in the student's permanent files. Changes in curriculum are made when appropriate on the basis of this evaluation. If a student returns to the regular program, he is given appropriate credit for work completed at the Center.

The third step in the evaluation procedure is the final evaluation for graduation. This evaluation covers the three areas of the Learning Center program: (1) basic skills levels in reading and mathematics; (2) the successful completion of the required curriculum; (3) the ability to enter and succeed in the world of work or in further education. Each student's occupational interest area is evaluated according to his individual career goal.

Minimum graduation requirements include the following:

1. 9th grade reading level (as defined by a standardized test).

2. Ability to communicate effectively (as measured by performance proficiency test).

3. Mastery of these areas of mathematics (as defined by performance proficiency

    a. addition
    b. subtraction
    c. multiplication
    d. division
    e. fractions
    f. decimals
    g. measurements
    h. percentages
    i. practical application of (a-h)

4. Satisfactory completion of study in the following areas: (as measured by performance proficiency tests).

    a. Social Science
        1. American History and Institutions
        2. World Geography and Culture
        3. Black Studies
        4. World of Work
        5. Current Issues
        6. Consumer Education

    b. Science
        1. Physical
        2. Earth
        3. Biological
        4. Health

5. Career awareness as measured by performance proficiency

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (continued)

6. Must qualify in one or more of the following areas:

a. Vocational Technical School Training
   1. Certification by teacher of the completion of the vocational course
      a) Receiving a passing grade
      b) Completion of the sequence
   2. Satisfactory attendance pattern
      a) Regular attendance in school at least 90% of the time
      b) Promptness pattern at least 90% of the time
      c) Informing teacher of necessary absences
   3. Maintaining satisfactory working relationships with employer/trainer and fellow workers (ability to work out problems).
   4. If student completes training before graduation, he would either seek job in this field or enter another training program.

b. Training - On the Job or in Training Center
   1. Certification of at least entry level skill by employer or trainer
   2. Satisfactory attendance pattern
      a) Regular attendance at training or job at least 90% of the time
      b) Promptness pattern at least 90% of the time
      c) Informing employer/trainer of necessary absences, preferably in advance
   3. Maintaining satisfactory working relationships with employer/trainer and fellow workers (ability to work out problems).
   4. If student completes training before graduation, he would either seek job in this field or enter another training program.

c. Competitive Employment

   If a student enters the program with a specific vocational skill and wants to utilize that skill on a job, he would be placed directly in the competitive labor market.
   1. Certification of skill by employer or trainer
   2. Demonstration of skill on a job for a period of (6) six months or more
   3. Satisfactory attendance pattern
      a) Regular work attendance at least 90% of the time
      b) Promptness pattern at least 90% of the time
      c) Informing employer of necessary absences
   4. Ability to maintain satisfactory working relationships with employer and fellow employees (ability to work out problems).

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III. JUSTIFICATION

This program began as the result of the recognition of a serious problem - that too many secondary youth were either dropping out of school or remaining in school for social reasons only. These were the youth who just didn't accept or respond to conventional educational methods and services.

More specifically:

They were achieving at least two or more grades below the norm, especially in reading and mathematic skills.

They were potential dropouts that could only be served in an educational program suited to their needs.

They had a negative self-concept and were not planning for the present or the future.

Their home situation, environmental conditions, criminal records and other personal factors necessitated intensive individual attention.

Their behavior ranged from apathetic to violently disruptive.

Society cannot afford to have youth leaving school unprepared to adjust to today's complex social and economic life. These young people are intelligent and sensitive individuals. Their past experiences may have hampered their development. Given the chance, they can perform as well or better than other students who do not have these obvious handicaps.

IV. PROGRAM OUTLINE

Communication Skills - study in the areas of:

A - Reading
B - Compostion
C - Literature
D - Language
E - Listening and Speaking

Social Studies - The primary goal of this section is to help students understand and deal with the world in which they live.

Students will study:

A - American History
B - American Government and Institutions
C - World Cultures and Geography
D - Black History
E - Current domestic and world issues
F - World of Work
G - Consumer Education

PROGRAM OUTLINE (continued)

Mathematics

Math I - The student will master the following areas of math:

A - Addition
B - Subtraction
C - Multiplication
D - Division
E - Fractions
F - Decimals
G - Measurements
H - Percentages

Math II - Consumer Math - practical application of math skills in everyday living.

Science - the student will study:

A. General Science
   1. Physical Sciences
   2. Earth Sciences

B. Life Science
   1. Health Science
   2. Biological Sciences

Career Development

The student will be involved in exploring career alternatives and developing his own career plans.

Occupational Sequence

The student will participate in one or a combination of the following areas:

1. Vocational or technical training
2. On-the-job training
3. Extensive or in depth work experience in a specialized skill area

Additional:

1. Career awareness
2. World of work orientation
3. Vocational and personal guidance
4. Any school program